Risk and Social Transformation: Gender and forced migration

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Forced migration is one of the most visible and disruptive consequences of armed conflict for civilian populations, regardless of gender. People flee their homes, often crossing international borders in order to escape specific instances or fear of persecution or of 'generalized violence' due to conflict and insecurity. As conflict has transformed in the decades since the end of the cold war, front lines have been harder to fix, and civilian populations have borne the brunt of chronic, protracted and unpredictable conflict dynamics. The impacts are staggering in scale; the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees announced in June 2015 that 59.5 million people are now forcibly displaced worldwide (UNHCR 2015a).

No region of the world remains untouched by forced migration. Both Africa and Asia have been heavily affected by large scale refugee movements over the last two decades, and South America has seen a vast Internally Displaced People (IDP) population in Colombia over many years. Numbers of refugees globally (just over 11 million at mid- 2015(UNHCR 2015b)) are now considerably lower than those of IDPs (38 million in 2015(IDMC 2015)), for whom flight from danger does not necessarily lead to the crossing of an international border. In Asia, the largest refugee populations by far have for several decades been Afghans in Pakistan and Iran, and large numbers of Iraqis have also been displaced. More recently still, over 3 million refugees have fled Syria, with 6.5 million more displaced within its borders (European University Institute 2015).

In Africa, several regional conflict complexes in the 1990s and 2000s brought forced migration, in West Africa, the Horn of Africa and Central Africa in particular. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo conflict has led to the deaths of nearly 4 million people and the continuing displacement of 2.3 million more (Coghlan et al 2006; UNHCR 2012). In

Sudan, hundreds of thousands sought refuge in neighbouring countries, while millions more were displaced within the country as a result of several linked conflicts. The secession of South Sudan and the creation of Africa's newest nation in 2011 changed without resolving forced migration dynamics since internal conflict within the new state has caused further displacement despite substantial repatriation in the last few years.

Despite the popular perception in the global north, most forced migrants in the developing world remain in their regions of origin (UNHCR 2015a). More men than women make the longer and often more dangerous inter-continental journey to claim asylum in developed countries. The numbers of men and women who flee their homes are roughly equal. Nevertheless, as detailed below, they may have different reasons for fleeing, as well as different experiences of flight and exile. Contemporary experiences of forced migration are so diverse, complex and contingent they cannot be generalized. Even for narrowly defined 'Convention refugees',[1] who have crossed an international border due to actual or feared persecution, the variety of their possible experiences and encounters is wide.

This chapter first indicates some of the ways that people are constituted as refugees and the ways in which their experiences may differ widely depending on context and positionality. In particular, I discuss how gender identity and subjectivities interact with the legal and practical exigencies of becoming a refugee or IDP. I then illustrate these issues with the case of South Sudanese refugees in Uganda whom I studied. I make an argument about the significance of subjectivities in relation to the opportunities and risks afforded by forced migration by the South Sudanese through the lens of three analytical areas; namely, labour, social change and violence.

Encountering Forced Migration

Refugee movements in the developing world are increasingly prompted by mixed motives. They may be heavily influenced by exposure to conflict in many forms, as well as to linked economic triggers, and environmental and other factors. The dynamics and processes of contemporary conflict lead to massive pressure on livelihoods as well as on lives, and

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[1] Under the UN 1951 Refugee Convention, a refugee is someone who 'owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country'. The Organization of African Unity expanded this definition in various ways in 1969 for refugees in Africa, and included 'generalized violence' as grounds for flight.

conditions of long-term insecurity and flux also undermine socio-cultural networks and the functioning of so-called local 'coping mechanisms'. In this context we need to understand diversity in each 'phase' of forced migration: during the pre-flight period, during a period of exile (however protracted) and in the context of any potential or actual durable solution. As an element of this, gender identity will construct and interact with the specific nature of an individual's encounter with conflict and forced migration.

For this and other reasons, there is no single 'refugee experience'. That said, some issues and dynamics can be identified as likely to impact the nature of forced migration experiences in diverse contexts, and especially in the developing world. Without endorsing simplistic circular notions of 'cycles' of forced migration, we can see patterns in the factors likely to be definitive in constructing experiences of forced migration: the kind of environments from which people are obliged to flee and the choices available to them within these, the circumstances of their actual flight, the kind of reception offered to them in host states, the length of their exile and prospects for a satisfactory durable solution. Refugees exist, of course, within a specific political economy, and their reception and treatment is ever framed by the competing projects of interested actors, as well as by purer forms of solidarity and humanitarian response. Not surprisingly, therefore, the wider political and economic priorities and objectives of non-refugee actors and stakeholders assume considerable significance in the responses made to refugees in the developed and developing world. The recent difficulty faced by the European Union in trying to convince member states to offer resettlement places to Syrian refugees, despite their evident protection needs, is a case in point.

The kinds of bureaucratic, legalistic and disciplinary structures encountered by forced migrants are inevitably embedded in the gender relations of the states they leave, enter and pass though. The gendered aspects of asylum law, policy and practice, as well as the myriad other governance mechanisms against which refugees and IDPs come up define responses and protection space available to them in ways that may be implicit rather than explicit.

In the developing world, as a consequence of the kinds of situations which force people to flee their homes, refugees and other forced migrants frequently move *en masse*, and are often recognized as refugees by host states on this basis. Instead of undergoing individual status determination procedures, therefore, they are given legal recognition

initially as refugees as a group. Subsequent humanitarian responses to them are frequently conditional on them accepting a number of limitations, notably on their freedom of movement. Refugees who live in camps and settlements in sub-Saharan Africa, and in many parts of Asia, share many of the same challenges relating to the provision of adequate services, the availability of decent and sustainable livelihoods, and avenues for self-development more broadly. Increasingly, those who opt not to live in such institutional or bureaucratic contexts head instead for urban centres, where they mainly live unsupported by governments or aid actors, despite the paucity of options available to them in most cases. Most experiences of exile in the developing world last for a very long time, with millions of refugees having failed to find a durable solution after a decade or more (Crisp & Slaughter 2009, Lindley & Haslie 2011).

To what extent can refugees in either rural or urban contexts integrate and build new lives for themselves in the context of protracted exile? Clearly, this is a legal as well as a socio-economic and political question, with as many answers as contexts. But an urgent question is how refugees can forge an acceptable life for themselves given the uncertainty, and often the poverty and marginality, of exile. Beyond this, refugees are usually assumed to aspire to a post-exilic life, or at least to the achievement of a durable solution which may imply settling permanently in the country of exile, again moving on, or returning 'home', among other more complex options. Each of these issues and questions is likely to point to differences between the way that women and men understand and respond to their experience of forced migration.

Gender and the significance of subjectivities

The diversity and variation in forced migration experiences implies the centrality of individual and group subjectivities in understanding how these have played out in specific contexts for particular people. The gender identity of refugees is one of a number of critical variables affecting how they construct and are exposed to danger, constitute and react to political and other threats, take decisions to flee, and engage with life in exile, including as objects of humanitarian aid. Age or generation, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, religious or other cultural identity may be equally significant in some contexts. As shown below, specific analyses should explore the ways in which each of these identities interact and motivate or facilitate response and action in situations of forced migration.

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The analytical point of departure is the understanding of a mutually constitutive relationship whereby gender both affects the context and experience of forced migration, and is affected by it. Therefore, asking--as a kind of 'add-on'--how gender characterizes the experience of forced migration for men and women is insufficient and superficial. Rather, we need to understand how the very categories and classifications of forced migration discourse are constructed by the assumptions and practices associated with gender identities and relations, and vice versa. People do not necessarily experience even similar contexts of forced migration in the same way. Moreover, how gender identities are constructed, understood and interpreted, and how these processes relate to other aspects of their life and experience are also influential.

Analyses of the ways in which gender and refugees' experiences interact must be inclusive and extensive (Fiddian-Qasmiyah 2014). Thinking about gender and refugees means considering refugee experiences of flight, political identities, livelihoods and labour, intra family dynamics, status, power and policy. All issues, including each of these, are constituted through constructed gender identities and relations, which are in turn affected by them. One important implication is that gender should not be used, as has often been the case, to refer exclusively to women, with the male category assumed as the neutral or default position (cf Colson in Indra 1999). A gendered analysis of forced migration is expressly not only about women but about the multiple pressures and opportunities differentially available in the context of conflict and flight to men and women. A relational analysis is required that studies the mechanisms by which identities, activities and power are negotiated, contested and invested by forced migrants. An important recent body of literature assesses the ways that masculinity in particular finds itself under pressure in the context of forced migration, and what the consequences of this might be in socio-political and other terms. Achilli (2015), Dolan (2002), Hart (2008), Payne (1998) and Turner (2004), for example, highlight some of the ways in which men's status and productive activities can be undermined and stripped away in the context of forced migration, with negative consequences for self-esteem and developmental opportunities, and with potentially linked impacts on drug and alcohol abuse, mental health and well-being, the prevalence of domestic violence in refugee settings, and indigenous political leadership systems and practices.

The principal refugee protection organization is the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, whose approach to identifying and responding to the gendered dimensions of forced migration has developed considerably over the last two decades. The UN Refugee Convention definition of a refugee cited above expressly does not refer to the applicant's gender or to any gender-specific forms of persecution. In its field-based protection and assistance activities, however, UNHCR has been obliged to address the specific challenges of flight, exile and the search for durable solutions for men and women forced migrants.[2] In policy terms it has come a long way from its 1991 'Guidelines on the Protection on Refugee Women' to its much more inclusive 'Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming Forward Plan 2011-16' (UNHCR 1991, UNHCR 2011).

The experience of asylum seeking women, perhaps particularly in the industrialized north, we now recognize, is likely informed by the difficulties of political and judicial institutions in understanding their experience and activities as political, rather than as domestic or 'cultural'. As Edward (2010) points out, asylum determination systems are reluctant to viewing or interpreting women's protection needs as 'political' (see also Crawley 2001). Similar tensions are to be found in the global south, where protection regimes still tend to focus on the kinds of activity and risk performed and experienced by men rather than women. The consequent threats to the security of women and children may be more difficult to prove. Women may be less likely to be treated as needing specific protection interventions *vis a vis* their political or public roles. Protection space has, however, been expanded with reference to 'newer' forms of persecution relating to women (e.g. female genital mutilation), and to men and women in relation to their sexuality.

Perhaps starting with Harrell-Bond's seminal 1986 work *Imposing Aid*, a considerable body of literature addresses the causes and consequences of forced migration, and the way in which populations of forced migrants are treated and managed. A minority of writers have addressed the gendered dimensions of forced migration in the developing world (Callemard 1999, Camino & Krulfield 1994, Daley 1991, Hyndman 2000, Indra 1990, Martin

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[2] For UNHCR (2011), 'Gender refers to the socially constructed roles for women and men, which are often central to the way in which people define themselves and are defined by others. Gender roles are learned, changeable over time, and variable within and between cultures. Gender often defines the duties, responsibilities, constraints, opportunities and privileges of women and men in any context. Gender equality refers to the equal enjoyment of rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women, men, girls and boys. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of each gender are respected'.

2003). Some anthropologists in particular have included a gender perspective in their analyses of broader topics (Hammond 2004, Grabska 2010, Grabska 2014, Hart 2008, Turner 2010). Many of the themes which emerge as important both from the literature and from my own field research overlap and are entangled in the everyday business of living, working, having families and engaging in the public world. Contexts are critical, and I now briefly introduce the refugee groups I have studied in Uganda since 1996. The rest of the chapter will explore some of the gendered consequences of forced migration in sub-Saharan Africa predominantly through the lens of ethnographic material derived from research with this refugee group between 1996 and 2012[3]. I draw mainly on research with Sudanese refugees living in Uganda from 1992 to 2012. Early ethnographic research at the Kiryandongo Settlement in Masindi (then Kiryandongo) District, was complemented by further research visits there as well as at Kyangwali, Ikafe, Rhino Camp and Achol-pi Settlements, and urban refugee locations in Arua, Masindi and Kampala. I adopted classic anthropological research methods including participant observation, formal, semi-formal and informal interviews with key informants, focus groups and collaborative research activities. The research is also informed by policy oriented research relating to forced migration with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and UN organizations in West Africa and elsewhere.

Home to around 14,000 refugees for many years, the Kiryandongo settlement provided opportunities for families to develop agricultural as well as residential plots, and to establish numerous churches, schools and other public institutions. Public services were managed by a combination of government ministries, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and some of its implementing NGO partners, with a small number of refugee Community Based Organizations.

Sudanese refugees in Uganda

The Sudanese refugee population in Uganda includes a range of people, experiences and responses over an extended period. Uganda and Sudan have a long history of hosting each other's refugees, with Sudanese most recently present in Uganda from the late 1980s as a result of continued internal conflict in Sudan that ended with the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement in 2005. Many women among the refugee population in Uganda complained that they were entirely excluded from discussions prior to the signing of the agreement; this broadly reflects the difficulties some Sudanese women have long experienced in being heard in the public sphere.

Well over a quarter of a million Sudanese took refuge in Uganda during the conflict; their stay there was fraught in several ways. Although the government of Uganda presents itself as having been a generous and liberal host, any refugee hoping to benefit from humanitarian aid, or UNHCR protection activities, was required to register and remain in a refugee camp or settlement as defined by the state (Kaiser 2006). This caused limitations in terms of access to and enjoyment of a whole range of rights, including social and economic rights. Refugees also suffered considerably from the insecurity associated with the long-term conflict between the government of Uganda and the Lord's Resistance Army in the refugee hosting area (Finnstrom 2008).

The protracted nature of the refugees' stay in Uganda – most did not leave their camps and settlements to repatriate or pursue other durable solutions until after 2007 – brought challenges to them individually and collectively including with respect to social change and transformation, livelihood, and to physical security. Each of these is addressed briefly below.

Social change and forced migration
Becoming a forced migrant can be characterized in several ways. One of the most important factors is that it is almost always a process of change; different actors manage this change in different ways with different outcomes. Very large numbers of refugees in Africa move from one rural area to another, and flight may well involve being established by host government or aid providers in a refugee camp or settlement, or similar setting. Recent years have also seen a massive increase in the number of so-called 'urban refugees'; some African countries have seen dense concentrations of refugees and asylum seekers in urban areas where they face many challenges. One of the main reasons why refugee men and women might travel

to cities and towns is to try to find employment or income generating activities there, often a difficult enterprise. The experiences of those remaining in rural areas may be defined by what kind of support they receive, how enabling their environment is, and the extent to which they can achieve reasonably sustainable livelihoods (Omata 2011). Depending on which income generating or employment opportunities are available in a given context, men and women may find themselves more or less able to access these in ways familiar from the 'home' context.

Social Change; status, roles and activities

The social flux and opening up of usual social modes and practices can lead to new opportunities being made available to members of communities who had previously been limited. One frequent example of this in the context of forced migration is that women who have been used to being largely restricted to the domestic sphere may be encouraged or enabled to move out into the wider realm of public affairs and activity. This may be a matter of necessity: they need to pursue cash income in the absence of subsistence agricultural options. Or it may be due to a change in the way that local governance is enacted, with new, participatory governance committees or councils being invented in refugee settings. In these cases members are often elected according to sectoral specialism or technical expertise. In addition to posts concerned with 'security', education' and so on, councils often also include a secretary (or similar title) for 'women' and or for 'youth'. Even if none of the other roles is taken on by women, in Ugandan camps the secretary for women has usually been a woman. Notably, refugee women are not always keen to commit themselves to committee work as they find they have little free time to spare, for reasons discussed below.

Opportunities may increase in exile, or they may decrease, as in the case of older men who find themselves relatively marginalized from leadership positions after having been used to them as if by right in the pre-flight period. Turner's work (2010) shows how individuals may suffer, for example, because they cannot speak the language (literally and metaphorically) of government staff and aid providers in refugee camps. But customary practices and leadership systems are also difficult to translate in mixed communities of people who may have quite different 'traditional' practices. In short, who you are in a

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community affects whether you are likely to gain or lose status and opportunities in the context of exile, and gender identity is highly influential in this respect.

In Kiryandongo and other Ugandan camps, one notable context in which women were able to play an increasingly prominent role, with the apparent support of their male peers, was in the increasingly dynamic world of church activity and management. Christian churches proliferated in the Ugandan refugee camps, and were a fertile ground for social, humanitarian and other activity for men and women.

In Uganda women have taken the opportunity to become involved over the years of protracted exile in a way that many say they would have found it hard to do in Sudan, in business and money making activities. Whether this relates to small scale market selling or the production of food and drink, or relates to a higher level of trading activities varies considerably. What is clear is that women who reported that they would have been dismissed for poor morality had they attempted such activity at home, were increasingly free to pursue independent economic agendas. Peoples' needs change too, of course, and the conflict which produced both men and women as refugees also had more single female-headed households; women who may have had few other choices open to them now had greater need to assert themselves economically.

What is clear is that power is not always easily shared, even when activities are diversified. For example, in order to support the 'empowerment' of refugee women in the late 1990s, the UN World Food Programme required that each food distribution team in Ugandan camps have a woman 'food basket monitor', they presumably were not aware that unofficially men were trailing these officially appointed team members, to sanction their decisions (or not) with the male authority such decisions were locally supposed to require. Social change takes place slowly, and nothing ever guarantees that it will sustain as conditions change. This is something that needs to be ascertained on a case by case research basis.

Labour and its interconnections

In general one thing which is usually recognized and accepted by those working with refugees in rural areas is that the definition of the kind of labour which is culturally generally regarded as 'female' or women's work expands in the context of exile. This is partly because the reproductive tasks that women are usually burdened with increase in a context where

networks have been disrupted, where the physical environment is not known, where relied-on natural resources may not be immediately available and so on. Women find themselves needing to spend more time and effort than they did before, carrying out the same child caring, family feeding, and household management tasks for which they always took responsibility. Importantly, households themselves may well have changed size and shape in the context of exile. Individual women may be struggling to feed and care for more people in exile than they did at home, if they have taken over the care of orphaned or lost children, elderly people or others.

Paradoxically, as women's labour in rural refugee camp settings frequently increases for these reasons (see also Daley 1991), men's labour and activities are often curtailed, with negative consequences for their ability to contribute to the household. If men cannot access the kinds of employment or productive activities in which they were engaged 'at home', their role and status as breadwinner and head of household may be compromised. It can be very difficult for refugee families in such circumstances to manage the changing labour patterns so that household requirements are met as much as possible, and so that personal identity and dignity are maintained. In Rhino Camp Settlement in northern Uganda, Sudanese women complained that they were burdened with heavy domestic work; moreover, the absence of employment opportunities for their husbands meant that they were forced into market work, selling baked or cooked goods to generate a cash income of sorts. The ultimate irony for them was that, having invested heavily in meeting family needs by doing arduous work, husbands who were unable to contribute at all vilified these wives for not being at home and producing food in a timely manner. Men may themselves feel emasculated or undermined by these scenarios, leading to 'negative coping' activities such as alcohol or substance abuse, or domestic violence (see also Payne 1998). In Rhino Camp refugee women who participated in focus group discussions felt strongly that domestic violence had increased during exile, and that the frustration of refugee life for men was partly to blame for this.

The kinds of employment or training opportunities available to girls and women in the Sudanese camps in Uganda has changed marginally over the years, but has largely been framed by fairly conservative ideas about what were suitable activities for women. In Kiryandongo Settlement, young women struggled for a long time before a small number of them were finally accepted onto vocational training schemes for carpentry and other

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manual skills. More commonly women were encouraged to engage in craft production, even in the absence of any market at all for such outputs. Professional training opportunities were very limited for men and women; of the relatively few who were able to qualify as teachers, for example, only a small minority were female.

The principal difficulties of refugee camp life for men and women in Uganda, when they live in places not affected by immediate physical insecurity, tend to revolve around the material challenges of achieving and sustaining an adequate livelihood. A wide range of economic activities are carried out, and contrasting pressures are felt by men and women whose responsibilities *vis a vis* the feeding and protection of their families are frequently hard to meet. Identifying those who are worst off in this sense is often a matter of looking at the quality of social networks and resources that individual refugees can call on for support. Poorly connected refugees are likely to face most problems. Feeding and educating children is exceptionally challenging for relatively impoverished single women with children (widowed or otherwise) who lack the effective support of brother, father or husband. While men may have more options in terms of gaining access to wage labour (even if they have to migrate for it, and it exposes them to other kinds of risk and exploitation), women may resort to entering into sexual or married relationships with partners they would not otherwise have chosen. Due to financial need, they may establish relationships on unfavourable terms, for example as a poorly treated second or third wife, in order to access some kind of domestic protection. A further difficulty in this context is that partners or husbands may not be willing to take on responsibility for a new wife's existing children.

Risk, Protection and Vulnerability to Violence

As noted above, women's experiences of violence in the context of flight or exile may be more likely to be analysed as a domestic, cultural or interpersonal issue than those of their male counterparts. Men's experiences may be more likely to be assessed in terms of their political meaning and consequences.

Men and women refugees clearly experience risk and vulnerability in significantly different ways. This is partly because of the different ways that they are likely to be involved, directly or indirectly, in the conflicts that generate forced migration. Young men, as many sources show, are frequently considered to be or actually to be more vulnerable to military conscription than young women of the same age. Girls and women may be pressed into military servitude or supportive labour (including sexual labour) as in the case of

Ugandan and Sudanese women and girls abducted by the Lord's Resistance Army during the late 1990s and 2000s. Nevertheless, young men are more likely to be forced into fighting roles. In some cases, such as young Sudanese in Ethiopia in the 1990s, boys and young men are tricked into volunteering for what they have been told will be educational or training opportunities. Instead, they find that they have arrived at military training camps from which escape is very difficult. The avoidance of unwanted involvement in fighting for rebel or government forces is frequently cited as a reason for flight by young men who have chosen to try to pursue educational opportunities instead.

As Grabska's research (2011) in Kakuma Camp in Kenya shows, 80 percent of the 92,000 strong refugee population were under 30, and 59% were male. In the refugee camps and settlements of Uganda, many young men in particular reported having decided to flee Sudan when they realized that they risked conscription into the Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), or because they had no avenues for educational advancement at home. In some cases, for example among young men in the Ikafe and Rhino Camp Settlements in Arua District in the late 1990s and early 2000s, the two were directly linked: boys reported that SPLA commanders told the boys that they could go to school only when they had completed military service in Sudan, but not before. One of the consequences of conflict and forced migration from an educational perspective is that one finds 'pupils' much older than usual in classes intended for younger children. This can have consequences for classroom authority and dynamics, especially when students have experience fighting and are unused to school discipline. It also has implications in terms of what livelihood generating activities young men can be involved in, if they are attempting simultaneously to remedially acquire education. So social life more broadly can be impacted by the gendered consequences of conflict and forced migration. A young man who is not making a living because he is still at school in a refugee camp has little chance of marrying and achieving adult status in many sub-Saharan African refugee communities. Thus the social reproduction of society may also be disrupted in this way.

For women and girls, vulnerability to physical violence is alarmingly ubiquitous during forced migration. Not only is sexual violence frequent in conflict which may itself be reason for flight, but risks of violence of this kind continue through the various experiences of forced migration in a depressingly wide number of contexts (Hyndman 2000, Callemard 1999, Grabska 2010, Payne 1998, Dolan 2009). Women are frequently preyed upon by

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officials, soldiers and bureaucrats in the course of flight and asylum seeking activities. In one refugee settlement in western Uganda in the early 2000s, the government representative responsible for issuing travel permits and other documentation was apparently recalled from his post at least partly because of repeated complaints from refugee women that he extorted sex from them when they went to apply for travel documents. Considerable evidence shows that sexual violence against women is also widespread in refugee camps in Kenya. In the notorious case of Dadaab camp, women leaving the relative protection of their domestic compounds to fetch firewood are at extreme risk of rape by perpetrators referred to mainly as '*shiftas*' or bandits. The strong implication is that many of these attacks are politically motivated and are carried out by people known to the women or their clan members. Yet efforts to prevent such attacks have been largely limited to practical and literal interventions such as the provision of fuel for cooking, rather than any deeper, more challenging response. It should also be noted that the kinds of supportive interventions offered to women who suffered sexual violence have also been said to attract fake complaints from women who hope to receive improved protection as a result.

In some cases, female refugees who have suffered from serious sexual violence including rape and/or severe domestic violence and who meet various other criteria, have been offered third country resettlement as a protection solution. This is actively sought as a prize by some women and many men, but can be a mixed blessing. Third country resettlement inevitably means moving out of communities where women were known and, to some extent, supported. After resettlement women and their dependent children may find themselves in strange or unknown national environments with support networks are limited; the women must support children and make a new life in challenging social and physical environments. One woman in Kiryandongo who had suffered brutal and repeated attacks by her husband reported her desperation to leave the region in order to escape such beatings, but expressed serious reservations about a possible scenario whereby she could be resettled with her children to Denmark, where she knew virtually no-one, did not speak the language and feared the climate. The government of Denmark was generously offering refuge to female victims of domestic violence from sub-Saharan Africa at that time, which women both appreciated and regarded with trepidation.

Proving causal links between gender violence and refugee settings is a highly problematic and fraught enterprise. However, relatively impoverished and marginal refugee camps and other refugee contexts clearly are likely to be high pressure environments giving rise to both multiple undesirable social activities and 'coping strategies' (Harrell-Bond 1986, Kaiser 2004). Anecdotal and observational evidence points to the likely correlation between the boredom and frustration of refugee life, especially where refugees are not provided with access to productive or income generating activities, and increased alcohol and drug consumption (Martin 2003, Dolan 2009). In sub-Saharan Africa, for cultural reasons, it is usually considered women's responsibility or role to brew beer, distil alcohol and to sell these. Indeed, this is often one of the only available opportunities for generating small amounts of cash in refugee settings. Unfortunately, this trade can produce an alcohol-soaked social environment, especially during evenings, holidays or otherwise quieter periods like the dry season; this appears to lead to increased incidence of domestic abuse.

Refugee women in settlements in northern Uganda, notably Rhino Camp Settlement, linked alcohol consumption and increased 'wife beatings' in a casual and relatively uncomplaining way. They themselves pointed to the pain and frustration of life in refugee camps for men who are used to being active breadwinners and useful members of society. In this interpretation the fact that men feel useless is what leads them to drink and to beat their wives These women went further and pointed to the skewing of aid interventions in Rhino Camp where, they argued, women (having been defined after research as 'reliable' and more likely to repay loans) were offered access to several income generation schemes. The problem, in their analysis, was that their own workloads were very high. Finding time to participate actively in these opportunities was not always easy for them. Meanwhile, denied access to credit and loans, their frustrated husbands resented their activity and occupation as much as their actual opportunities and expressed their rage in the usual way. 'Do something for the men!' was the loud cry from these women.

Men and women of all ages have to take multiple and overlapping risks into account when making decisions. The signing of the peace agreement between warring parties in Sudan in 2005 put significant pressure on refugees to register for eventual voluntary repatriation to their home country from Uganda. While some young people in particular felt that their interests were best served by an early return, to demonstrate their willingness to invest in and contribute to the rebuilding of post-conflict Sudan, others were left with no

means of support in Uganda when their families wanted to go 'home'. Very quickly, however, new risks for female secondary school students became apparent, as warnings circulated in schools in Uganda about the desire of SPLA commanders stationed in their home areas in Sudan to forcibly 'marry' returning students. Repatriates alerted those still in Uganda that refusal to marry was futile and could bring reprisals down on the heads of parents and family members. The self-help secondary school in the Kiryandongo settlement was not alone in hastily transforming a classroom into the most rudimentary of dormitories so that female students could remain in the relative safety of school in Uganda. Going 'home' was more dangerous for this particular category of refugee than remaining in Uganda, even without the protective presence of parents or other immediate family.

Conclusions; Diversity, Change and Responses

Forced migration inevitably brings changes. These changes are experienced differently by people for whom the only feature they have in common is their refugee-hood. Even within the same refugee group, individuals will experience flight, exile and the search for a solution to their problems in different ways. Social and political lives are complex and organic, and, as social scientists show, when a substantial shift takes place in one area of life, changes in other dimensions can be expected. This goes some way toward explaining the interrelatedness of many of the issues discussed here; certainly issues around social change, livelihood and protection were hard to disentangle for the Sudanese in Uganda during the 90s and 2000s.

If one were to think of social change as a zero sum game, whereby power and opportunity are redistributed among a population as conditions change, one might argue that overall, women refugees in Uganda have experienced a relative improvement in their standing and in the nature and extent of the opportunities open to them during their period in exile. Many of the activities in which they now engage enthusiastically – including, for women in Kiryandongo, 'digging' as well as weeding and harvesting, small trading activities and so on – were closed to them in Sudan on the grounds of their unsuitability for women. Similarly, among the Kiryandongo population, the number of educated women and of women professionals, businesspeople and public figures increased during their time in Uganda. Meanwhile, however, their domestic responsibilities are as onerous as ever, perhaps more so. The changes have inevitably been more evident for younger women than

for the members of the older generation, whose roles and lives have arguably changed less. For the small minority of women who were able to buck the trend of early pregnancy in the settlement, and progress to tertiary level education where sponsorship could be found, life chances in Uganda must be higher than they were in pre-flight Sudan.

For men, the picture is different, but also mixed. As has been reported in other refugee settings, younger men in exile tend to assume the roles and associated positions of status formerly held by older men in the pre-flight period. The emphasis on the formal, public domain of decision making and governance has tended to advantage younger men over their fathers and grandfathers, since they are more likely than their older relatives to be multilingual and to have some familiarity with how local government and aid systems work. Older men seem to have lost power and authority in this interpretation, as the kinds of clan and ritual knowledge which was once emphasised and valued is less critical and relevant to refugee life in Uganda. This pattern has clear exceptions, however, so we should avoid thinking that new processes are firmly set and have replaced previous systems and priorities.

In 2002, for example, after an outbreak of communal violence in the settlement at Kiryandongo, members of all ethnic groups present asserted that elders played important roles in mediating between warring groups and hastening an end to the violence. It seems that the gravitas and quiet authority that elders brought to their intervention was welcomed compared to the more public, business-like interventions of the younger generation.

Avoiding the trap of ascribing all social and other kinds of change to the fact of forced migration is crucial. The Sudanese, for instance, moved from a much less to a much more developed socio-political environment. The fact that they did so as refugees was only one part of their story and their experience. Nevertheless, transformation in social process and relationships have been negotiated in interesting ways; the social categories and practices employed have been modified to allow change to take place, while preserving valued features of socio-cultural life (see also Kaiser 2008).

As the material discussed in this chapter shows, the differential opportunities and risks to which men and women are exposed in the course of forced migration are continuous in many ways with the patterns and priorities of their pre-flight lives. Changes observed should be read in this light, as should the variations in experience consequent to other social identifiers such as age, socio-economic status and so on. An important final

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point is that nothing guarantees that any social changes for good or ill will sustain in the next phase of refugees' experience, whether this is in the context of return home, or some other solution. Change will continue; of this we can be certain.

If we turn briefly to the role of aid providers in refugee settings, on which I have deliberately not focused here, one finds an inevitable ethical dilemma. How can humanitarian and development agencies intervene in ways which support or oppose the agendas of specific sub-groups of the population? To consider a gender related example, on what basis might an agency ethically set out, as many do, to improve women's situation in refugee camps, if this means not merely securing their physical safety and ensuring adequate livelihoods, but also 'empowering' them to assert claims for a greater say in decision making? In short, may agencies support the struggle for gender equality? Refugee settings frequently are intense places where competition over power and resources is evident, and where different groups will have different views about how best to proceed. In Kiryandongo as elsewhere, agencies have sometimes faced difficulties in trying to please everybody on gender and other issues. One international NGO that sought to support women in situations of domestic violence by providing safe houses was attacked for undermining local mediation and family dispute resolution mechanisms, and for attempting to impose 'western' notions of equality and rights. Most importantly, the refugee population itself was divided as to whether the NGO had done the right thing, or even whether it even had the right to attempt to intervene.

The literature on 'refugee women' across the decades has emphasized that these women are not passive victims of circumstance, but active agents, even if the conditions within which they operate are difficult and limiting. Understanding gender as a relational category and seeking to understand the ways that men and women conceptualize and respond to the challenges of forced migration offers the best chance for recognizing the impressive and ingenious nature of their efforts to survive and transcend forced migration.

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